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NSC FOR DORAN AND WATERS

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SUBJECT: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS: MAJOR DECISIONS
DEFERRED TO IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION

REF: CAIRO 245

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR FRANCIS J. RICCIARDONE, FOR REASONS
1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: THE THIRTY-FOUR PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS BEFORE EGYPT'S PARLIAMENT WILL BE PUT TO A LEGISLATIVE VOTE BY MARCH 20, AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO A NATION-WIDE REFERENDUM ON OR ABOUT APRIL 4. THE ACTUAL TEXTS OF THE AMENDMENTS ARE NOT YET PUBLIC (AS THEY ARE REPORTEDLY IN THE PROCESS OF BEING SUBMITTED TO THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY BY THE DRAFTING SUBCOMMITTEE) SO IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT THE CONSTITUTIONAL MODIFICATIONS WITH PRECISION, BUT THE PARAMETERS OF THE PACKAGE ARE EMERGING FROM RULING PARTY AND PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENTS. IN SHEER NUMBER, THE AMENDMENTS FULFILL PRESIDENT MUBARAK'S PROMISE TO PUT FORWARD THE "BIGGEST AND WIDEST" CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES SINCE 1980, BUT THEY ARE LARGELY AIMED AT SUPPRESSING THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD, AND DO NOT REPRESENT SWEEPING REFORM. THE CHANGES SHOWCASE AN INCREMENTAL POLITICAL REFORM PROCESS AT WORK, WHILE MAINTAINING THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY'S (NDP) FIRM CONTROL. THE EMERGING PACKAGE REPRESENTS AT BEST A DISAPPOINTING MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR A MEANINGFUL ADVANCE OF DEMOCRACY IN EGYPT, BUT IT DOES LEAVE ROOM FOR FUTURE ADVANCES UNDER SUBSEQUENT LEGISLATION. WE CAN HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT IN SUPPORT OF EGYPT'S DEMOCRATIC REFORMERS BY FOCUSING OUR DIPLOMATIC ADVOCACY AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON THREE AREAS OF NEW LEGISLATION (TWO OF WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO IMPLEMENT THE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES):

-- THE NEW SUPREME ELECTIONS COMMISSION, TO ENSURE ITS INDEPENDENCE;

-- THE NEW ANTI-TERROR LAW, TO PROTECT CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS;

-- ENCOURAGING A NEW POLITICAL PARTIES LAW TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT OF LEGAL PARTIES. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

WHERE THE PROCESS STANDS

¶2. (U) FEBRUARY WITNESSED PARLIAMENTARY HEARINGS ON THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, DURING WHICH CONSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARS, HEADS OF VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL SYNDICATES, AND OFFICIALS FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON HUMAN RIGHTS TESTIFIED AS TO THEIR VIEWS OF THE AMENDMENTS. THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY'S CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE HAS REPORTEDLY FINISHED DRAFTING THE TEXTS OF THE AMENDMENTS, AND IS IN THE PROCESS OF SUBMITTING THEM TO THE FULL LEGISLATURE FOR DEBATE AND APPROVAL (THE FINAL PARLIAMENTARY VOTE WILL LIKELY BE HELD AS EARLY AS MARCH 20). A NATIONAL REFERENDUM ON THE

AMENDMENTS REPORTEDLY IS EXPECTED ABOUT APRIL 4, ALTHOUGH THE DATE HAS YET TO BE CONFIRMED. THE REFERENDUM WILL PRESENT THE CHANGES AS A MONOLITHIC PACKAGE - VOTERS WILL VOTE EITHER "YES" OR "NO" TO ALL 34 AMENDMENTS.

ELECTORAL AND PARTY-RELATED CHANGES

¶3. (SBU) SEVERAL OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FOCUS ON THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY REQUIREMENTS, ELECTIONS OVERSIGHT, AND BANNING POLITICAL PARTIES FORMED ON THE BASIS OF RELIGION:

-- ARTICLES RELATING TO ELECTORAL ISSUES (62, 94, AND 205) ARE LIABLE TO BE MODIFIED SO AS TO ALLOW FOR CHANGES TO THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM. THE NDP HAS APPARENTLY NOT YET DECIDED TO MOVE TO A FULL-FLEDGED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM. DUE TO DISAGREEMENTS WITHIN THE PARTY ON THIS ISSUE, THE AMENDMENTS WILL PROBABLY NOT SPECIFY THE EXACT NATURE OF EGYPT'S FUTURE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, BUT RATHER LEAVE MANY OPTIONS TO BE DECIDED BY FUTURE LEGISLATION. NDP INTERLOCUTORS REPORT THAT THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION (SET TO OPEN IN NOVEMBER 2007, WILL DEBATE THE SHAPE OF THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM, WHEN THE CURRENT ELECTORAL LAW IS MODIFIED IN ORDER TO REFLECT THE EXPECTED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION.

-- THE AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 76 WILL OBTAINLY FACILITATE MORE COMPETITIVE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, WHILE PROTECTING AGAINST ANY SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO THE NDP CANDIDATE AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE SUCCESSION TO MUBARAK. THE ARTICLE WILL BECHANGED SO THAT, FOR AN INTERIM 10-YEAR PERIOD, PARTIES WHICH HOLD AN ELECTED SEAT IN THE PARLIAMENT OR THE SHOURA COUNCIL CAN RUN A PRESIDENTIAL CADIDATE (CURRENTLY, ONLY

FOUR PARTIES MEET THIS REQUIREMENT - NDP, AL WAFD, AL GHAD, AND TAGGAMU). FOLLOWING THIS INTERIM PERIOD, IN ORDER TO RUN A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE:

(1) A PARTY WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BEEN IN EXISTENCE FOR AT LEAST 5 YEARS PRIOR TO THE ELECTION;
(2) ITS CANDIDATE MUST HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF THE HIGHEST LEADERSHIP BODY OF THE PARTY FOR AT LEAST 1 YEAR; AND,
(3) THE PARTY WOULD HAVE TO HOLD AT LEAST 3% OF THE SEATS IN BOTH PARLIAMENTARY HOUSES (I.E., 14 SEATS IN THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, AND 6 SEATS IN THE SHOURA COUNCIL).

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT WOULD NOT CHANGE THE DEMANDING REQUIREMENT FOR INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES TO OBTAIN 250 ENDORSEMENTS FROM THE PARLIAMENT, SC, AND LOCAL PROVINCIAL COUNCILS - A NEAR-IMPOSSIBLE FEAT FOR A NON-NDP-BACKED CANDIDATE TO ACHIEVE.

-- ARTICLE 88 WILL LIKELY BE AMENDED TO TERMINATE THE DIRECT SUPERVISION OF JUDGES AT EVERY POLLING STATION, TO BE REPLACED BY A SUPREME ELECTIONS COMMISSION (COMPOSED AT LEAST PARTIALLY OF HIGH-RANKING RETIRED JUDGES) TASKED WITH SUPERVISING ELECTIONS AND CONDUCTING POLLS IN ONE DAY.

-- ARTICLE 5 WILL BE AMENDED TO BAN BOTH POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES ON "RELIGIOUS, RACIAL, OR ETHNIC FOUNDATIONS ... POLITICAL ACTIVITIES MUST BE BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF CITIZENSHIP ALONE." WHILE SUCH A BAN (ALREADY DE FACTO IN PLACE) GUARDS AGAINST ESTABLISHING FORMAL POLITICAL PARTIES ON SECTARIAN BASES, IT WOULD EFFECTIVELY EXCLUDE THE FORMAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF THE MB, EGYPT'S MOST POWERFUL AND POPULAR OPPOSITION MOVEMENT.

PAVING THE WAY FOR THE NEW ANTI-TERROR LAW

¶4. (U) IN ADVANCE OF THE PROMULGATION OF EGYPT'S ANTICIPATED NEW ANTI-TERROR LAW (CURRENTLY IN DRAFT, AND EXPECTED TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE NEXT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION), THE GOVERNMENT IS MODIFYING ARTICLE 179:

-- THE AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 179 WILL LIKELY PROVIDE THE GOVERNMENT THE FLEXIBILITY TO MAINTAIN VARIOUS POWERS IT WOULD OTHERWISE LOSE WITH THE DE-ACTIVATION OF THE EMERGENCY LAW. THE REVISED ARTICLE COULD ALLOW FOR THE SUSPENSION OF RIGHTS CURRENTLY GUARANTEED BY ARTICLES 41, 44, AND 45 (NO SEARCH, DETENTION, INSPECTION OR CORRESPONDENCE, OR RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT WITHOUT A JUDICIAL OR PROSECUTORIAL WARRANT), AND THEREBY ALLOW FOR THE CONTINUATION OF ROBUST GOE AUTHORITIES UNDER THE NEW ANTI-TERROR LAW.

SHIFTS IN EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE POWERS

15. (C) SEVERAL AMENDMENTS FOCUS ON THE EXECUTIVE-LEGISLATIVE RELATIONSHIP AND RESPECTIVE AUTHORITIES:

-- SOME AMENDMENTS WILL INCREASE PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITIES, TO INCLUDE ALLOWING PARLIAMENT TO INTRODUCE CHANGES TO THE NATIONAL BUDGET, "TO PLACE CHECKS TO MAINTAIN A BALANCE BETWEEN ESTIMATED REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES," TO HOLD A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE ON THE PRESIDENT'S CABINET, TO WITHDRAW CONFIDENCE FROM THE CABINET WITHOUT PUTTING THE MATTER TO A NATIONAL REFERENDUM, TO HAVE THE RIGHT TO "ACCEPT OR REJECT" A NEW PRIME MINISTER'S "GOVERNMENT PROGRAM," (VICE BEING ALLOWED TO SIMPLY "DISCUSS" IT, AS IS CURRENTLY THE CASE).

-- ARTICLE 136 WILL BE AMENDED SO THAT THE PRESIDENT CAN DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT BY PRESIDENTIAL DECREE ALONE, WITHOUT A NATIONAL REFERENDUM (CURRENTLY, A NATIONAL REFERENDUM IS REQUIRED IN ORDER FOR THE PRESIDENT TO DISMISS THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY). SENIOR NDP INTERLOCUTORS HAVE TOLD US THIS WILL ALLOW THE PRESIDENT TO HAVE A "STICK TO HOLD" OVER THE LEGISLATURE, "TO BALANCE OUT THE NEW AUTHORITIES OF THE PEOPLES ASSEMBLY."

-- THE AUTHORITIES OF THE SHOURA COUNCIL (SC), EGYPT'S UPPER LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER, WILL BE INCREASED. ARTICLE 195 WILL BE CHANGED TO GIVE THE SC THE RIGHT TO APPROVE "CERTAIN TOPICS AS PART OF ITS COMPETENCIES" RATHER THAN MERELY TO "CONSULT." HOWEVER, NDP STATEMENTS ON THIS AMENDMENT NOTE THAT THE SC'S "OPINION SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE ADVISORY WITH RESPECT TO OTHER (ISSUES)." THUS, IT IS NOT YET CLEAR PRECISELY WHAT NEW AUTHORITIES THE SC WILL HAVE,

ALTHOUGH THE BROAD EXPECTATION IS THAT THE BODY WILL NOW HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPROVE NEW LAWS, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS, AND TREATIES.

-- ARTICLES 78, 82, 84, AND 85 ARE LIKELY TO BE CHANGED SO THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL ASSUME THE AUTHORITIES CURRENTLY CONSTITUTIONALLY DELEGATED TO THE VICE-PRESIDENT IN THE EVENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S TEMPORARY INCAPACITATION OR RESIGNATION. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER THE PM WOULD ALSO ASSUME THE ROLE CURRENTLY DELEGATED TO THE PARLIAMENTARY SPEAKER IN THE EVENT OF THE PRESIDENT'S DEATH - I.E., ASSUMING THE PRESIDENCY FOR 60 DAYS PRIOR TO THE SELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT. THESE CHANGES WILL ALSO ADDRESS A TIMING DISCREPANCY REGARDING SUCCESSION - ARTICLE 78 CURRENTLY CALLS FOR THE CHOICE OF A NEW PRESIDENT 60 DAYS BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF THE TERM OF THE CURRENT PRESIDENT, AND THAT THE NEW PRESIDENT SHOULD BE SELECTED "AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE THE EXPIRATION OF THE TERM" (THEREBY NOT ALLOWING FOR A FULL 60 DAYS TO SELECT A NEW PRESIDENT). THE LIKELY MODIFICATION WILL REPORTEDLY ADDRESS THIS INCONSISTENCY IN TIMING.

-- PRIME MINISTERIAL AND CABINET AUTHORITIES WILL BE ENHANCED BY THE AMENDMENT OF ARTICLES 138 AND 141. THE CHANGES WILL LIKELY CALL FOR THE PM TO "COOPERATE" WITH THE PRESIDENT "AS REGARDS APPOINTING AND DISMISSING DEPUTY PM'S AND DEPUTY MINISTERS" (CURRENTLY, THE PRESIDENT ALONE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO APPOINT THE PM, HIS DEPUTIES, MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS), AND CALL FOR THE COUNCIL OF

MINISTERS TO "COOPERATE" WITH THE PRESIDENT IN DEVELOPING THE COUNTRY'S GENERAL POLICIES (CURRENTLY, THE PRESIDENT, "IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CABINET," HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE POLICY AND SUPERVISE ITS IMPLEMENTATION). THUS, THE PM AND ALL MINISTERS WILL CONTINUE TO BE APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT RATHER THAN A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.

-- ARTICLE 74 CURRENTLY ALLOWS THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE UNSPECIFIED "URGENT MEASURES" IN THE EVENT OF "ANY DANGER THREATENING NATIONAL UNITY OR THE SAFETY OF THE MOTHERLAND OR THE CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF STATE INSTITUTIONS." THE ARTICLE WILL LIKELY BE CHANGED TO SPECIFY THAT IN ORDER FOR THE PRESIDENT TO TAKE SUCH MEASURES, THE DANGER SHOULD BE "GRAVE AND IMMEDIATE," AND THE PRESIDENT SHOULD CONSULT WITH THE SPEAKERS OF BOTH LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS AND THE PM BEFORE ASSUMING THESE POWERS.

OTHER AMENDMENTS

16. (U) THE REMAINING AMENDMENTS DEAL WITH A RANGE OF ISSUES:

-- TWELVE OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FOCUS ON REMOVING OUTDATED SOCIALIST TERMINOLOGY FROM THE CONSTITUTION, AND BRINGING THE DOCUMENT MORE IN LINE WITH EGYPT'S CURRENT ECONOMIC REALITIES. THE ARTICLES TO BE AMENDED ARE 1, 4, 12, 24, 30, 33, 37, 56, 59, 73, 180, AND 194.

-- ARTICLE 161 (WHICH CURRENTLY PROVIDES FOR EGYPT BEING DIVIDED INTO ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS), WILL REPORTEDLY BE AMENDED TO ALLOW FOR "GREATER DECENTRALIZATION." NDP STATEMENTS TO DATE ON THIS AMENDMENT CALL FOR "DELEGATING REAL AUTHORITY TO THE MUNICIPALITIES IN RUNNING THEIR AFFAIRS."

-- THE AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 173 WILL CREATE A NEW SUPREME JUDICIAL COUNCIL, COMPOSED OF THE HEADS OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENT JUDICIAL BODIES, AND CHAIRED BY THE PRESIDENT.

WHAT'S MISSING

17. (C) MEDIA COMMENTATORS, THINK TANK ANALYSTS, CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISTS AND OPPOSITION PARTIES CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON ELEMENTS MISSING FROM THE AMENDMENTS PACKAGE:

-- PRESIDENTIAL TERM LIMITS: MUBARAK HAS REJECTED ANY AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 77, THAT WOULD RETURN TO PRE-1980 LANGUAGE IMPOSING A LIMIT OF TWO CONSECUTIVE SIX-YEAR PRESIDENTIAL TERMS.

-- FORMATION OF NEW POLITICAL PARTIES: ANY LIBERALIZATION IN THE RESTRICTIVE PROCESS OF CREATING POLITICAL PARTIES HAS BEEN KICKED DOWN THE ROAD.

-- JUDICIAL RULINGS REGARDING ELECTIONS FRAUD: ARTICLE 93 (WHICH WILL NOT BE AMENDED) GIVES PARLIAMENT THE RIGHT TO "DECIDE UPON THE VALIDITY OF ITS MEMBERS." THUS, THE ASSEMBLY CAN IGNORE COURT RULINGS REGARDING ELECTORAL FRAUD, SO THAT EVEN IF AN MP IS FOUND TO HAVE WON AN ELECTION THROUGH FRAUDULENT MEANS, UNLESS THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY VOTES BY A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY AGAINST THE PARLIAMENTARIAN, HE CAN MAINTAIN HIS SEAT.

-- CHANGE TO CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF SHARI'A: THE PACKAGE INCLUDES NO MODIFICATION TO ARTICLE 2, WHICH STIPULATES THAT "THE PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF LEGISLATION IS SHARI'A."

-- CHECKS ON PRESIDENTIAL POWERS: DESPITE THE AMENDMENTS BOLSTERING LEGISLATIVE AND CABINET AUTHORITIES, PRESIDENTIAL POWERS REMAIN EXTREMELY BROAD AND FAIRLY UNCHECKED. MANY OPPOSITIONISTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCATES ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT THIS OPPORTUNITY WAS NOT TAKEN TO CURTAIL, EVEN MODESTLY, THE EXECUTIVE'S WIDE-RANGING AND

NEAR ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY.

COMMENT

18. (C) THE NOTORIOUSLY APATHETIC EGYPTIAN PUBLIC IS SLEEPING THROUGH A LIVELY POLITICAL DEBATE ON THE AMENDMENTS. THAT SAID, THE CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE DOES NOT REPRESENT SWEEPING REFORM AND IS LARGELY AIMED AT SUPPRESSING THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD (MB) AND INSTALLING GAMAL MUBARAK AS EGYPT'S NEXT PRESIDENT. THE CHANGE TO EGYPT'S ELECTORAL SYSTEM, WHICH MAY EXCLUDE PARTICIPATION OF INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES IN NATION-WIDE ELECTIONS, IS A CLEAR RESPONSE TO THE MB'S ELECTORAL SUCCESS IN THE 2005 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. LIKEWISE, THE FORMAL CONSTITUTIONAL BAN ON RELIGIOUS PARTIES STYMIES THE MB'S EMBRYONIC ATTEMPT TO FORM A POLITICAL PARTY. WITHOUT PROVIDING BREATHING ROOM TO MB-AFFILIATED CANDIDATES TO RUN AS INDEPENDENTS, NOR ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF ISLAMIST POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, THESE AMENDMENTS CONSIGN THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUED AND UNRESOLVED TENSIONS WITH THE MB. THIS IS CLEARLY A RISK THE EVER-CAUTIOUS MUBARAK IS WILLING TO TAKE.

19. (C) DESPITE EXPLICIT RESISTANCE FROM THE NDP, WE HAVE ENGAGED OVER THE PAST YEAR WITH MUBARAK AND KEY NDP MP'S AND LEADERS ON THE AMENDMENTS PROCESS. THE TASK BEFORE EGYPTIAN REFORMERS NOW WILL BE TO CONCENTRATE ON GETTING THE BEST FOLLOW-ON IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION POSSIBLE UNDER THE NEWLY AMENDED CONSTITUTION. WE CAN HAVE THE GREATEST IMPACT BY FOCUSING DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THREE DISCRETE AREAS:

-- FORMATION AND FUNDING OF THE NEW SUPREME ELECTIONS COMMISSION IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE. EGYPT SHOULD WORK TO ENSURE THE NEW BODY IS INDEPENDENT, DEDICATED TO UPHOLDING THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE PEOPLE AND TECHNICALLY CAPABLE, FOLLOWING INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED MODELS FOR SIMILAR BODIES.

-- THE NEW COUNTER-TERROR LAW HAS BEEN CITED AS THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTIONAL ARTICLE 179. ON THE ONE HAND, THE NEW CT LAW OSTENSIBLY IS INTENDED TO PUT AN END TO THE NEAR-PERMANENT "STATE OF EMERGENCY" THAT HAS SUSPENDED LEGAL PROTECTIONS OF FREEDOMS UNDER THE CURRENT CONSTITUTION. ON THE OTHER HAND, MOST EGYPTIANS PRESUME THAT THE NEW CT LAW ITSELF WILL ALLOW FOR THE FUTURE SUSPENSION OF VARIOUS RIGHTS, AND THAT THE AMENDMENT OF ARTICLE 179 WILL LEAD TO THE "CONSTITUTIONALIZATION" OF ANTI-DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES CURRENTLY ALLOWED UNDER THE EMERGENCY LAW. OUR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OUR NORMAL ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT WILL AIM TO KEEP THE CT LAW FOCUSED ON TERRORISM, NOT ON STIFLING DOMESTIC NON-VIOLENT CRITICS OF THE GOVERNMENT.

-- THE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS PACKAGE DOES NOT ADDRESS THE CRITICAL CHALLENGE, NOTED PREVIOUSLY BY MUBARAK, OF ENHANCING POLITICAL PARTY LIFE IN EGYPT. THE RESTRICTIVE POLITICAL PARTIES LAW IS AN OBSTACLE TO POLITICAL PARTY PLURALISM. WE WILL FOCUS OUR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON ENCOURAGING A NEW DRAFT LAW THAT WILL FOSTER DIVERSITY AND COMPETITION.

RICCIARDONE